

Walking Tour of Swampoodle: Squares 752, 753, 777, and 778

6/22/2013

Itinerary

Stop 1. Starting point: Ebenezer's, 2nd & F Streets, NE

Welcome, introduce speakers, distribute handouts.

Handouts:

- Photograph of Swampoodle from the Capitol
- Photograph of Swampoodle from the Capitol showing streets
- Map of Swampoodle from
- Map of DC in 1888 showing B&O Railroad station and tracks and Pennsylvania Railroad station and tracks.
- Map of Squares 752-753, 777-778 (1903)
- The Brick Builder magazine detail of brick building for Ludlow Mfg. Co. showing segmented arch/gauged brick and round window openings (1892).
- Brick coursing: Flemish bond, American bond (common bond), running bond.
- Image from Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1892-1893 (led to Classical Revival Style, examples in the neighborhood)
- Short biographies of architects and builders, architectural styles (Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, Craftsman).

Introduction to Swampoodle: Who lived here, why, housing stock. Early history: topography, Tiber Creek, Irish neighborhood in 1860s. GPO history primarily focusing on Jackson Alley, the heart of Swampoodle, McMillan Plan, Union Station, St. Aloysius Church— whose dedication provided the Swampoodle name, and important because it is one of the few buildings that remain from Swampoodle's earliest days ,the Convent of the Little Sisters on Swampoodle's outskirts, constructed in 1878. Tour will begin with earlier buildings and generally move forward in time.

Introduction to architecture in Swampoodle:

- Economics, employment opportunities, population growth, demand for housing. When most were built: 1885 to 1930s. (pre-1877 no building permits were required, so information on pre-1877 buildings is from maps, real property tax records)
- Influences on the development of the neighborhood:
 - This area represented a location of opportunity and a convergence of factors:
 - 1) the mass migration of Irish immigrants fleeing famine;
 - 2) the undeveloped land on where was then the outskirts of the developed city;
 - 3) the opportunities provided for the Irish in the growth spurts of Civil War-time Washington and the post War growth period; Swampoodle's location on the main east-west access road to Washington from the port of Bladensburg.

- Major influence: McMillan Plan of 1901 and Union Station
- World's Fairs: Centennial Exposition of 1876 (Colonial Revival)
- World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, Chicago (Classical Revival)
- Craftsman movement (porch-front rowhouses) (Many of these are also Colonial Revival)
- Bricklayer's art: designs and brick coursing
- Celebrity architects
- Life in the alley

[To reach Stop 2, walk east on F Street to 380-312 F Street] -- On the way, note the effects of the street grade changes from Union Station's construction on the houses on the 200 block of F Street, NE.

Stop 2 : 308-312 F Street, NE (1924): Craftsman movement/bungalows, brick porch front rowhouses; market demand for bungalows, how builders modified rowhouse design to let in more natural light and incorporated bungalow elements in rowhouses. These H.R. Howenstein rowhouses, designed by L.T. Williams, feature Craftsman elements: front porch, shed dormer, overhanging eaves, and exposed rafters. American bond brick coursing. Unlike these houses, Howenstein's rowhouses typically have a straight mansard roof with gable dormers. Note other Craftsman rowhouses at 228-236 F Street.

[Continue walking east on F Street, NE to the intersection of 4th and F Streets, and then walk north on 4th Street.]

Stop 3: 600 block 4th Street, NE:

- (A) 620-624 4th Street are rowhouse flats, with two entrances, built in 1904.
- (B) The oldest existing houses in Swampoodle (on very fringes of Swampoodle) are 680-696 4th Street, NE (1885), built by John C. Davidson and designed by an unknown architect. These are modest two-story two-bay flat front houses in common brick, with brick (vs. wood) brackets. They were probably built as rental properties. The Tuscan, (formerly the Ramona), 676 4th Street, NE was built in 1907 in the Italian Renaissance style. Architect unknown.

[Walk north on 4th Street, to G Street, then west on G Street to the corner of 3rd and G Street, then south on 3rd Street to 625 3rd Street, NE.]

Stop 4: The Ellsworth, 625 3rd Street, NE. This Classical Revival apartment building was designed in 1903 by Stuart Hilder. See photograph from World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.

[Walk south on 3rd Street to 601-607 3rd Street, NE.]

Stop 5: 601-607 3rd Street, NE, 300 F Street, NE (1894): B. Stanley Simmons rowhouses (Queen Anne Style). See The Brick Builder magazine detail of brick building for Ludlow Mfg. Co. showing segmented arch with gauged brick and round window openings (1892). These houses also have angled two and three-story bays, running bond

brick coursing, molded sill courses, and nebule molding. Simmons was one of the leading architects in Washington and later designed well-known apartment buildings (e.g., the Wyoming). Earlier in his career, he designed rowhouses such as these.

[Cross 3rd Street to and walk north on 3rd Street to 616-626 3rd Street.]

Stop 6: 616-626 3rd Street, NE (1892). Queen Anne style rowhouses with running bond brick coursing, nail head and pellet molding over windows, oriel windows balanced over the first story windows and door, rounded window openings on the third story, and iron stairs. Architect unknown. See The Brick Builder magazine building for Ludlow Mfg. Co. showing segmented arch with gauged brick and round window openings (1892).

[Walk to the rear of 626 3rd Street, entrance to former Gordon Avenue alley dwellings.]

Stop 7: 600 block 3rd Street, NE: former Gordon Avenue alley dwellings. See 39 brick alley dwellings on the map of Square 753 (1903) (all alley dwellings demolished by 1956). Alley dwellings were built as rental properties, often for African-American tenants. Alley life in Gordon Avenue: Occupations of alley dwellers, murder of a Russian grocer at 619 Gordon Avenue in 1902; hardships of alley residents including influenza epidemic of 1918; smallpox; illegal liquor sales; assaults.

[Walk back to 3rd Street, and then walk north to on 3rd Street to the intersection of 3rd and G Streets.]

Stop 8: 222-238 G Street, NE (1897). Senator John H. Sherman's rowhouses designed by T. F. Schneider with running bond brick coursing, angled bays and checkerboard brick design and dentils at the cornice. Schneider is famous for building the Cairo Hotel, 164 feet tall (1894), which led to the Height of Buildings Act in 1899.

Logan School was built at 301 G Street, NE in 1891 for African-American students. (DC public schools were segregated until 1954.) The tower features brick pellet molding and acanthus leaves (an ancient Greek design). By the 1930s, a larger school was needed, and a new school was constructed at 215 G Street, NE in 1934, and an auditorium was added in 1948.

[The next stop, 304-338 G Street, is across the street, to the east of 238 G Street]

Stop 9: 304-338 G Street, NE, north side (1907-1908) [stop on the corner near 338 G Street]: Classical Revival rowhouses built by Joseph M. Carmody, designed by A.M. Poynton and George S. Cooper. The World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 (Classical buildings was an uplifting influence on Americans during a depression and time of social unrest. See photograph of a representative Classical building from Columbian Exposition, with decorative Classical elements on houses: prominent cornices and swags.

[Walk north on 3rd Street to the 700 block of 3rd Street.]

Stop 10: 706-734 and 715-723 3rd Street, NE (1890, 1891). Queen Anne rowhouses designed by F. G. Atkinson. The 15 Atkinson rowhouses on the west side and also his five across the street built just one year later in 1891. The visual symmetry of the massing and facades is well-preserved here and expresses the architecture of multi-dwelling development that characterizes so much of the northeast part of the Hill and often differentiates it from the lot-by-lot development pattern in southeast Capitol Hill. 715 Third Street (1891) existed as the end unit in that row for almost 15 years until the Classical Revival units were built to the south and east.(previous stops on the tour). The visual distinction is very compelling. 2) The Atkinson five were speculatively developed by M. M. Parker, a city commissioner of the District of Columbia. Land speculation in the city was a very, very popular business and beginning with George Washington, some of the District's leading men, like Parker, were engaged in it. From here we can see the Little Sisters' Convent.

[Walk north on 3rd Street to the H Street Bridge, then walk west on the bridge.]

Stop 11: View from H Street Bridge of site of 12 vanished 19th century rowhouses in Square 752: 721-729 2nd Street and 200-214 G Street, NE.

End of tour